The Light Shineth in the Darkness

IN HIM WAS LIFE AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN. THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS, AND THE DARKNESS, AND THE DARKNESS HAS NOT OVERCOME IT.

NINETEEN CENTURIES AND SIXTY YEARS AGO A TINY LIGHT WAS LIT IN THE DARKNESS. BLACKNESS WAS ALL AROUND, IN THE PAST HISTORY OF MANKIND ONLY WARS, BLOODSHED: HYSTERIA, SLAVERY, CONFUSION AND ANXIETY CHARACTERIZED GOD'S CREATION--MAN. INDEED MANKIND'S STORY COULD BE LIKENED TO VAST, SHADOWY DARKNESS. A BLACKNESS THAT QUICKLY ENVELOPED EVERY SPARK OF HOPE, EVERY RAY OF LIGHT MUCH LIKE A MATCH QUICKLY BLOWS OUT ON A WINDY NIGHT.

BUT THIS LIGHT WAS DIFFERENT, IT DID NOT EXTENQUISH, IT WAS NOT OVERCOME BY THE BLACKNESS.

But fully either
ONE DARKNESS HAS NOT DISAPPEARED. THE PAST TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF HUMAN HISTORY ARE NO BETTER THAN THE PRECEDING TWO THOUSAND. IN 50 YEARS WE HAVE EXPERIENCED TWO BLOODY WORLD WIDE CONFLICTS, ~~BUT~~ OUR NATION ROCKED BY At Present are feeling the World is rocked

By a mammoth -Fall this-s
DISPUTES CONCERNING THE EQUALITY OF MAN, THE SMALL LIGHT DID NOT CONQUER

political conflict ~~form~~ that seems to have no resolution outside of conflict.

THE DARKNESS, IT IS STILL BLACK ALL ABOUT US. the tiny Flame still struggles

BUT, THE TINY LIGHT HAS NEVER GONE OUT. THE EVIL OF HUMAN HISTORY / ITS SHADOWS AND UNLIGHTED PATHS / HAVE NOT CAUSED THE LIGHT TO QUIT GLEAMING. FOR THIS LIGHT WAS LIT ONCE AND FOR ALL / BY HIM WHO IS THE SOURCE OF ALL LIGHT: THE FUEL THAT KEEPS IT ETERNALLY TWINKLING IN DARKNESS IS INFINITE LOVE AND CONCERN.

THIS LIGHT WAS STARTED IN THE SIMPLEST AND TINEST OF WAYS. IT BEGAN IN THE DIVINE SERENITY OF A MOTHER, THE HELPLESS CRY OF A NEW BORN BABY. IT BEGAN IN THE EVERYDAY OCCASION OF HUMAN BIRTH. BUT IT GREW, BIT BY BIT UNTIL LATER IT MET IN CONFLICT, THE DARKNESS AROUND IT. A RAGING STRUGGLE LIKE THE MAMMOTH FLAMES OF A FOREST FIRE. THERE WAS A CROSS, A TOMB AND DARKNESS. BUT THE LIGHT DID NOT GO OUT: IT KEPT GLEAMING THROUGH THE DARKNESS, CASTING ILLUMINATING RAYS ALONG THE PATH OF HUMAN EXISTENCE.

TONIGHT WE ~~XXXX~~ CELEBRATE THE LIGHTING OF THIS SMALL FLAME. ACCEPT A BIT OF IT--ALLOW IT TO GLEAM, SPARKLING AND SPUTTERING IN FRONT OF YOU, BATTLING THE DARKNESS ALL AROUND.

~~CEREMONY~~
At Completion

WHAT WE ARE DOING IS SYMBOLIC, BUT LET ITS MEANING BE MORE THAN HOLLOW SYMBOLISM. LET THIS TINY LIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU BE MORE. LET ITS LIGHT SHINE

THAT ALL DARKNESS BE DISPELLED. ACCEPT HUMBLY THE GIFT GIVEN US THIS NIGHT. NURTURE THE TREASURE GIVEN YOU BY GOD ALMIGHTY. LET JOY AND PRAISE ABOUND, WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN LIGHT, LIGHT THAT WE MIGHT SEE THE WAY, LIGHT THAT WE MIGHT BE SAVED.

AS EACH CANDLE ~~IS LIT~~ Burns MAY THE CHRIST CHILD BE BORN AGAIN. MAY THE LOVE AND COMPASSION THAT PERVADED THE STABLE BE KINDLED AGAIN IN EACH HEART. JOY TO THE WORLD, THE LORD HAS COME. AMEN.

Almight and Merciful Heavenly Father, Fulfill and enrich our experience tonight. - May the lighting of these candles mark the renewing of a glow in each of us. May the light gleaming from all of them be symbolic of the light cast by our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ.

Accept the rededication of ourselves with the light of these ~~darkness~~ candles. With thy sustainence may we find the way - may darkness be dispelled

Amen